

Bok cautions on secret research

Letter to Harvard faculty follows CIA controversy

By Richard Higgins
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Derek Bok, the president of Harvard University, has urged the faculty not to engage in secret research with government agencies that could harm Harvard's integrity or the free and open flow of ideas on campus.

In an effort to clear up confusion stemming from incidents last year in which professors accepted what they said were individual contracts with the Central Intelligence Agency, Bok also proposed that Harvard's "rules ... should apply equally to all research carried out by professors while on the Harvard payroll."

In a letter to the faculty to be released this morning, Bok cited two cases in which professors either agreed to conceal the source of their funding or permitted the CIA to review manuscripts before publication.

The incidents, which involved government professors Samuel Huntington and Nadav Safran, stirred an intense controversy on campus, and Bok convened a committee to help advise him on whether Harvard's rules on sponsored research were adequate and well-understood.

The open letter was Bok's first formal response. But, instead of declaring new guidelines, he wrote what he termed an "essay" to clarify the gray areas of Harvard's guidelines and to urge professors to display "the personal responsibility to decide what further forms of self-restraint are advisable."

Richard N. Frye, professor of Near East languages, said that although he had not read Bok's letter, he believed that "by opening the door to a scholarly relations ip to the CIA, whose methods are inimical to the ideal of an open uni-

versity, you're opening the door to the very kinds of restrictions Harvard is saying it would like to avoid."

In his letter, Bok noted that, because Harvard does not wish to police its faculty, "the standards individual faculty members set for themselves are likely to be as important as the rules the university promulgates."

While he agreed that Harvard's official guidelines for sponsored research may be both misunderstood or "inadequately framed" in some instances, Bok nevertheless underscored the basic principles behind the rules:

- Professors should not accept financial support for research that cannot be revealed.

- Professors should not give sponsors the right to review their manuscripts before publication if such reviews result in "unjustified censorship."

Moreover, Bok, proposed that there is, in effect, no distinction between university-sponsored research contracts and those undertaken by individual faculty members.

In the opening of his letter, Bok stated, "We have learned that professors have agreed to write books

on condition that they retrain from disclosing the source of funds for their research, and that professors consulting for intelligence agencies may be required ... to submit their scholarly manuscripts for agency review prior to publication."

This issue arose when it was disclosed in 1984 that Safran had permitted the CIA to review in advance his book on Saudi Arabia, which was funded by a \$100,000 CIA grant, and again last year when it was disclosed that Huntington had accepted a CIA grant to collaborate on a book, provided that he not disclose the CIA sponsorship.

Huntington said at the time that he regarded the CIA contract as individual consulting work and that he was not aware that he was bound to notify the university.

Reached last night, Huntington said he believed Bok's proposal to treat individual and university-administered research contracts equally was "perfectly reasonable."

He also said he did not regard the thrust of Bok's letter, which he said he had not read, as hostile to the idea of Harvard scholars working for the CIA. "In some respects," he said, "the interests of

the CIA are more closely aligned with those of the university than some other agencies. ... because their objective is simply to find out what is going on in the world."

In his letter, Bok avoided issuing a clear-cut dictum on prepublication review, noting that there are some limited cases in which prepublication review would serve legitimate privacy concerns of the sources and would not undermine the integrity of the published result.

For example, Bok stated that he did not believe faculty members should be "barred" from "agreeing to prepublication reviews" if the goal was to prevent disclosure of classified information - "unless and until there is evidence that such reviews have resulted in unjustified censorship."

He stated, however, that all professors "should be required to disclose that fact [of prepublication review] in any book or article so reviewed, and to indicate whether the review resulted in any changes in the manuscript."

In general, Bok's letter affirmed the need within the university to avoid research that "would restrict scholars from speaking freely about works in progress among interested students and colleagues" and to "avoid restrictions on the publication and dissemination of research results."